

Wisconsin Forestry Notes

December 2003

Wisconsin DNR - Division of Forestry

The Wisconsin Legislature is considering changes to the Managed Forest Law program. For more information about the proposals, visit the DNR Website at <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry/ftax/mflrevisioninfo.htm>

Increasing number of homes being built next to dangerous forest fuels not only create a greater resource exposure to forest fires, but the suppression effort becomes more complex and dangerous to firefighters.

The February 1-3 urban forestry conference branches out with innovative sessions you won't want to miss. Registration details are available on the [DNR Website](#).

Legislature Considers Forestry Measures

Assembly Bill 323 which proposes various changes to the Manage Forest Law program passed the Assembly on November 12 by a vote of 91 - 5. Before going to the Assembly, Joint Finance modified the bill by removing the grant program which was designed to use the closed acreage fees collected to purchase public access for recreation, including hunting. Instead the money will stay in the municipality (80%) and counties (20%) where it is generated. The bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Financial Institutions, and Insurance. The Committee has scheduled a hearing for 10 a.m. on Tuesday, December 2 in Room 330-SW of the Capitol. (The hearing may move to December 9 if it conflicts with the Extraordinary Session.)

On November 5, Governor Doyle signed into law **Assembly Bill 12** regarding educational requirements for foresters. This bill requires foresters employed by the DNR to have a bachelor's or higher degree in forestry from a school of forestry with a curriculum accredited by the Society of American Foresters or an equivalent degree from a school located in another country. This requirement applies only to newly hired foresters (existing DNR foresters are grandfathered). This bill also requires that tree marking on state forests must be done by a forester employed by DNR or an individual judged to be qualified by DNR and under the oversight of a DNR forester. To read AB 12 in its entirety, click this link <http://www.legis.state.wi.us/2003/data/AB12hst.html>.

Task Force Looks at Fire Program

Trenten Marty, Director of the Bureau of Forest Protection in the Division of Forestry, recently presented information to the Wisconsin State Assembly Speaker's Task Force on Forestry. The Task Force, comprised of various experts in the field of forestry, is charged with conducting a full inventory and assessment of Wisconsin's forested lands and the November meeting focused on the state's forest fire program. Marty's presentation addressed aspects of Wisconsin's fire management program, including prevention, the cooperative fire program and fire fighter safety. Infrastructure needs, including aerial resources, fire towers, the Division's aging radio communication system, and specialized fire suppression equipment were also discussed. Of particular concern are potential dangers associated with the steadily expanding wildland-urban interface. Marty told the Task Force that the increasing numbers of homes being constructed in Wisconsin's forests adjacent to some of our most dangerous forest fuels not only create a greater resource exposure to forest fires, but the suppression effort becomes more complex and dangerous to firefighters. For more information, contact [Trent Marty](#) at (608) 266-7978.

Invitation to Urban Forestry Conference

"Branching Out – Tree Care Beyond the Canopy" is the theme for the urban forestry conference scheduled for February 1–3 at the Regency Suites and KI Convention Center in Green Bay. A sample of the conference topics are:

- Technology You Can Use - a workshop featuring hands-on exposure to hand-held computer applications
- Economic Benefits of Trees in Cities and Towns – how trees can help a community's business sector
- Trees and Parking Lots, Codes for Success – practical ways to offset negative environmental impacts of parking lots

For more information and a registration form visit the DNR website at:

<http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry/uf/news/index.htm>

Industry directories long-maintained by DNR are now available in a searchable format on the UW-Madison forestry extension Website.

Wisconsin Forest Industry Info Online

Directories of the primary and secondary wood products industries within Wisconsin have been updated and are available online in a searchable format at:

<http://www.woodindustry.forest.wisc.edu/>

The database has information on the raw material a firm uses and the value-added products that they produce. You can search by firm, raw material, products or contact person.

If you do not have access to the Internet and would like paper copies of the directories, contact [Scott Bowe](#) at 608-265-5849.

Certification Assessments in Progress

The Division of Forestry retained the services of two independent forest certification firms to conduct evaluations of the State Forest, County Forest and the non-industrial Managed Forest Law (MFL) programs. The State Forest program is undergoing a full certification assessment while the MFL and County Forest programs are being evaluated under scoping assessments. Scoping assessments identify “gaps” that might preclude future full assessments.

The State Forests and County Forests are being evaluated against standards of the Sustainable Forestry Initiative program and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) while the MFL program is being compared to standards in FSC and the American Tree Farm System.

For the MFL audit, DNR staff were interviewed, office policies and procedures were reviewed, and field visits were conducted to ascertain how the MFL program is administered. A total of 38 management plans were reviewed and ground-truthed in Sauk, Monroe, Eau Claire, Dodge, Langlade and Lincoln Counties to see what the management plans addressed and how well they reflect what had occurred on the ground.

If the Division of Forestry successfully pursues certification of the MFL program, including all 28,000 small private participants, it will be the largest certified group program in the United States, and one of the largest in the world. Industrial MFL lands were not included in this scoping assessment.

Both the MFL and County Forest programs are being viewed under a “group certification” concept whereby the DNR would be the group manager, and each individual landowner (or County Forest), would be provided an opportunity to participate in certification.

The field audit portion of the assessments for the County and State Forests focused on interviewing key personnel in the programs, reviewing long-range plans and investigating management on a sample of the forests. Auditors did field tours of the Lincoln, Washburn and Eau Claire County Forests and the Kettle Moraine (south), Black River, Flambeau River and Northern Highland-American Legion State Forests. The Forests were selected in an attempt to provide a range of forest types, geographic areas and management challenges.

The final reports are expected this winter on all of these efforts. The decision on whether or not to follow through with a full certification assessment on the County Forest and MFL programs or to adopt a certification system on the State Forests will follow.

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